

BOARD OF TRADE FORGERIES - PART 2

A POSSIBLE MISCARRIAGE OF JUSTICE?

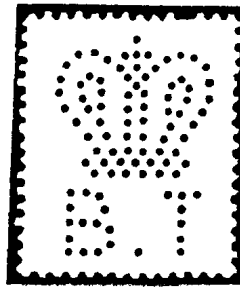
By John Nelson

In my earlier article (Bulletin 291 Pg.22-24) I explained in general terms, why I had, for a number of common sense reasons, come to the conclusion that most (if not all) alleged Board of trade perfin forgeries may in fact be genuine. I have subsequently pursued several lines of enquiry in order to establish a firm basis for what was previously conjecture on my part and to check the reliability of what have hitherto been allowed to pass, without question, as proven facts.

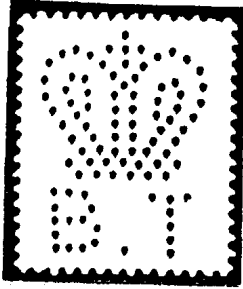
My primary objective is to disprove the 'rules' relied on by Captain H. T.Jackson to support his forgery theory, the first of which concerns differences in the position of the pins on the various known dies. I accept without question that Die 1 (illustrated) is, as was asserted by Captain Jackson, a die which was genuinely used by the Board of Trade. At this point, however, we part company. I do not accept that every other die with a variation in the position of the pins is a forgery.

In my perfin collection I have 97 (Crown)/B.T perfins obtained from a variety of sources over the past forty years. Of these, 45 are **Die 1** and include reversed and inverted dies, missing pins and partials. It would appear that all of these were produced on the same multi-headed perforator which was in the possession of the Board of Trade and I have evidence to show that this comprised at least five horizontal rows of dies.

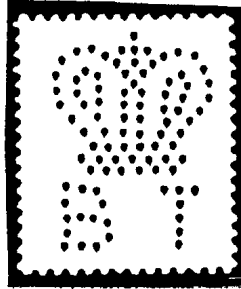
The remainder of my collection is represented by small quantities or single examples of no less than the **sixteen different dies numbered 2 to 17 which are also illustrated**. The illustrations in my copy of *G.B. Official Perfins* are insufficiently clear (and in two cases are missing altogether) to enable me to make accurate comparisons but I suspect I may have identified another dozen or so dies which, if judged by the Jackson criteria, are forgeries! I find the best points of comparison to be the shape of the 'petals' inside the crown, the formation of the letter 'B' and its position in relation to the bottom left pin of the crown.



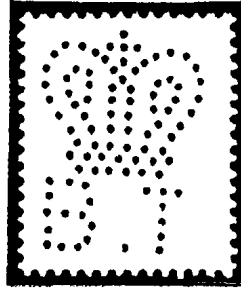
Die 1



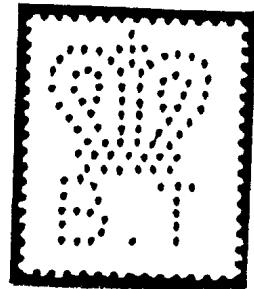
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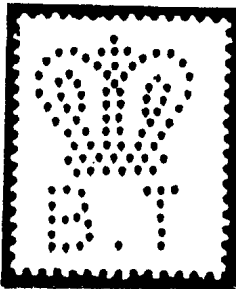
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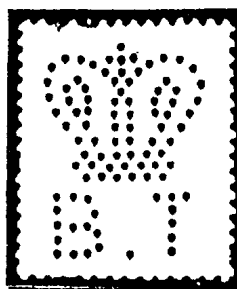
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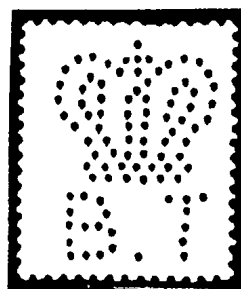
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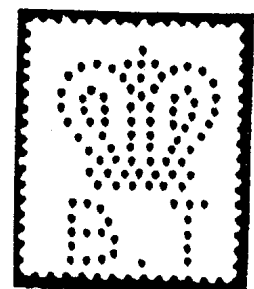
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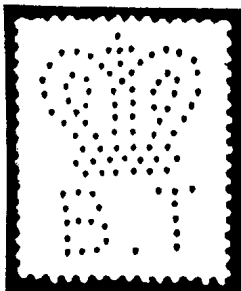
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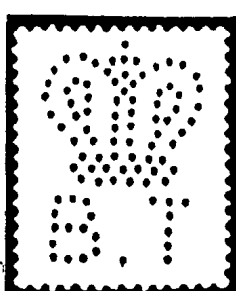
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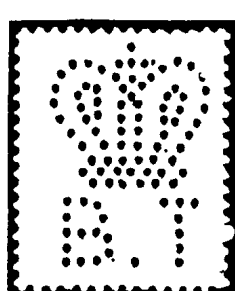
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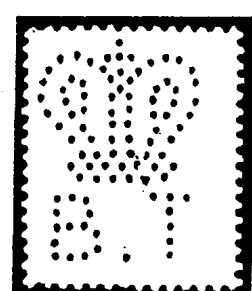
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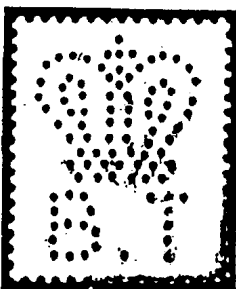
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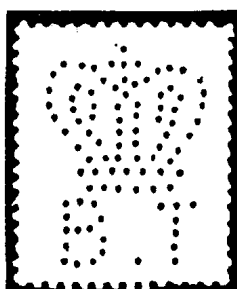
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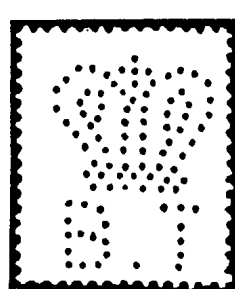
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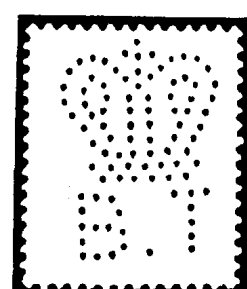
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16



17

Close examination of illustrations 2 to 17 shows that some of the dies, although different, have certain similarities in pin positions, particularly in the outer loops of the crown. To me, this indicates the existence of at least one other multiheaded press, the dies having been drilled from the same template. I suggest that stamps perforated by the 'Die 1' multi-headed press were used only in certain departments of the Board. Other departments or offices probably had their own multi-headed or single die presses which may have been in use at the same time as, or even before, the 'Die 1' press.

In the course of my enquiries I have been in contact with Mr W.A.Wiseman, who contributed the introductory notes to the Departmental Officials section of Gibbons GB Specialised Catalogue Volume 2. He is also the author of *The De la Rue Years*, a work which includes some interesting and valuable references to the Board of Trade. Mr Wiseman is quite certain that all known genuine Board of Trade perfin covers and wrappers bear perfin Die 1 only. If anyone possesses or knows of a Board of Trade cover, wrapper or identifiable piece bearing a perfin of any other die than Die 1, something which I firmly believe to exist, then I would appreciate it if they could send me details and, if possible, a photocopy.

It must be said that stamped Board of Trade covers, unless addressed to places abroad, are unlikely to exist in any great numbers. Around 90% of my Board of Trade perfins are of values above 1d which indicates that, as well as for overseas postage and registration fees, they were mainly used on packets and parcels, the wrapping of which would have been discarded and only the stamps, sometimes on piece, would have been saved.

Next I would like to contradict the assertion by Captain H.T.Jackson that the Board of Trade had no branches and that, since all post could accordingly originate only from its 'Head Office' in London, any postmark other than London on a Board of Trade perfin is a fair indication of a forgery.

I have obtained a copy of a book entitled '*Shoes and Ships and Sealing Wax*' by Susan Freeman, a history of the Board of Trade 1786-1986, which traces the Board's growth and details its wide range of

responsibilities. In addition to overseas trade the latter, in Great Britain, included railways and canals, shipping and seamen, emigration, fishing, trademarks, patents and designs, bankruptcy, company winding-up and the negotiation of trade disputes. There was no way in which all these responsibilities could have been adequately discharged by Civil Servants in offices in Westminster, the areas of supervision requiring the largest number of outside offices being those of merchant shipping and bankruptcy.

Kelly's London Directory for 1895, at the height of the Board of Trade perfin period, confirms that their Marine Department had offices for survey and emigration staff in a detailed list of thirty-seven of the principal seaports of Great Britain and Ireland. At the same time, the Board maintained the offices of Official Receivers in Bankruptcy in fifty-eight specified provincial cities and towns throughout England and Wales.

The proven existence of these offices alone is in my opinion evidence enough to dispel the notion prompted by Captain Jackson that a Board of Trade perfin is a suspect forgery because it bears a postmark other than London. Furthermore, my own collection includes (Crown)/B.T perfins postmarked Liverpool, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Halifax, Bradford, and Middlesbrough at all of which there were merchant shipping or bankruptcy offices of the Board of Trade.

In *The De la Rue Years*, Mr Wiseman records that in September 1894 an estimate of annual Departmental usage of postage stamps outside Head Offices was made by the Post Office. The Board of Trade figure was £3400, which I consider to be sufficient evidence that there were enough of their perfins around to make forgery a futile exercise.

If you can provide John with any additional information, please send to
69 Aperfield Road, Biggin Hill, Westerham, Kent TN16 3LX

Part 3 of this research will appear in the August Bulletin.

BOARD OF TRADE FORGERIES - PART 3 **A POSSIBLE MISCARRIAGE OF JUSTICE?**

By **John Nelson**

[Bulletins 291 Pg.22-24,292 Pg. 14,293 Pg. 13, Pg.294 Pg.24-27]

Another of Captain H.T.Jackson's 'rules' which I have examined is his assertion that the date on which the use of Board of Trade perfins 'ceased (officially) is, undoubtedly, May 14th, 1904'. I had previously accepted this as an authoritative statement and surmised in my earlier article that the Department's perforators may have been occasionally used without official sanction after that date. I now find the facts to be quite different.

According to Stanley Gibbons GB Specialised Part 2, Section MB, the date quoted above, May 14th 1904, is generally regarded only as the last day of general authorised usage of all Departmental OVERPRINTS. Captain Jackson appears to have assumed that the decision to withdraw official overprints also encompassed the Board of Trade perforated officials.

The circumstances which led up to the withdrawal of Departmental Overprints are detailed by Mr Wiseman in The De la Rue Years. Such withdrawal stemmed from official disapproval of the manner in which Civil Servants were able to profit by supplying unused Departmental Overprints, principally Office of Works and Army Officials, to stamp dealers and collectors. So great was the concern of the Post Office and the Inland Revenue in regard to this practice that the Treasury was brought in to find a solution. A working party was set up, comprising representatives of the principal Departments which were using overprints, and it was eventually decided that all Departmental Overprints be withdrawn as quickly as possible. The effective date for this was 14th May 1904.

The Board of Trade took no part in the discussions and there was no reason why they should have done so because, so far as their stamps were concerned, they had always pursued an independent line. Unlike the other Government Departments which had found it necessary to apply to the Post Office for special permission to overprint their official stamps, the

Board of Trade had some years previously adopted the use of perfins. This needed no specific approval but relied on the general authority of the Post Office which had been notified to Joseph Sloper on 13th March 1868.

Since the 1904 directive related only to official overprints there was no obligation at all for the Board of Trade to stop using their perfins and I can find no reason why they should not have continued with them until arrangements for the introduction of 'OFFICIAL PAID' franks could be completed in all their offices. This being the case, (Crown)/B.T stamps postmarked later than May 14th 1904 and KEVII issues appearing after that date would not have been forgeries.

Here perhaps lies the explanation for the alleged existence of batches of mint KEVn Board of Trade perfins. These were in all probability from stocks held in provincial and seaport offices when 'Official Paid' franks were introduced. No longer needed for official purposes and clearly unavailable for private use the stamps had scarcely any other destiny than to find their way into the hands of dealers and collectors.

There remains only one important aspect of Board of Trade perfin 'forgery' allegations for me to consider, that of the date on which their official use commenced.

In his 1962 Stamp Collecting articles, Captain Jackson asserts, (with the subsequent endorsement of Edwards & Lucas) that the date in question was 27th January 1881. He states that the date was given by Mr I.J.Bernstein, writing in 1906 in the Philatelic Record Handbook No.3 - "The Official Stamps of Great Britain". If anyone has a copy of this publication I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to read it. In the book the author is said to have thanked the Board of Trade for "information courteously supplied" but I think it fair to ask how specific the information was and who exactly supplied it.

Mr Wiseman, in Volume 2 of his book, draws attention to a letter written by the Treasury to the Post Office about 1884 asking on what authority overprinted Government Parcels stamps were in use. This seemed a strange enquiry as the Treasury had played a key part in the introduction

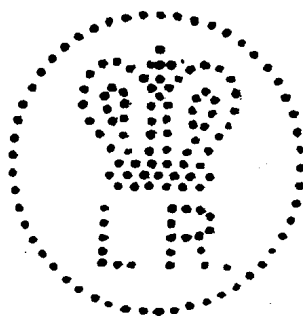
of the stamps. The explanation for this confusion was that owing to the structure of the Treasury, with five Divisions, the left hand did not know what the right hand was doing.

With the Board of Trade having an even greater number of Departments could this again have been the case in 1906? At all events the position is confused as Mr Bernstein went on to say that the first Board of Trade officials were 'prepared before November 1880'. What is meant by this is not clear. One would have thought that, equipped with a perforator and a supply of stamps, the perfins could have been 'prepared' and brought into use straight away.

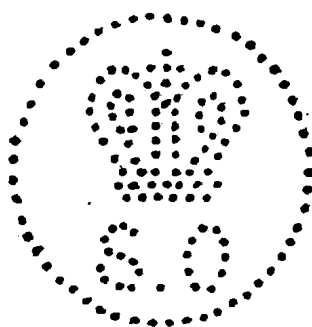
There is in existence at least one line engraved 2d blue Plate 15 perforated with the authentic Board of Trade Die 1 but the 2d blue had been superseded by the surface-printed 2d rose on 2nd December 1880. This means either that stamps no longer available from the Post Office were being perforated by the Board of Trade after 27th January 1881 or, as Captain Jackson accepted, that perforation was taking place before that date. Precisely how long before that date the process was going on is a fundamental unanswered question.

Several examples of the line engraved 1d red, which was superseded by the 1d Venetian red on 1st January 1880, perforated (Crown)/B.T, also exist. None of those recorded is however Die 1 so they are all dismissed by Captain Jackson as fakes - but are they? What I would like to establish is that some of the other dies were in official use at an earlier date than 27th January 1881 but evidence is hard to find.

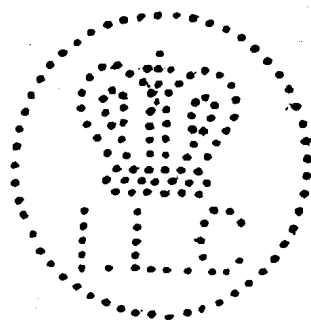
It is interesting to note that on pages 61, 63, 64 and 66 of *G.B. Official Perfins* there are a number of illustrations of the dies of cancelling perforators used principally in various courts of law. All except one have crowns **in the same format as that on the Board of Trade perfins** and most are the same as Die 1. Unfortunately the authors of the officials booklet quote no dates of use so, if any collectors possess complete legal documents or pieces which have been perforated with any of the court cancelling dies incorporating the Board of Trade style crown, I would much appreciate it if they could advise me of the dates of use evidenced by the date of the document, by a rubber stamp or otherwise.



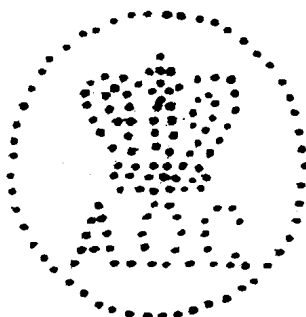
LAND REGISTRY



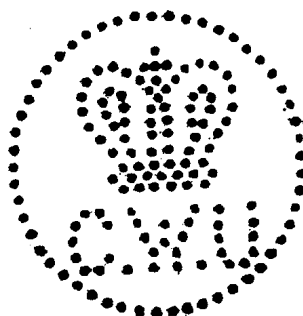
STATIONERY OFFICE



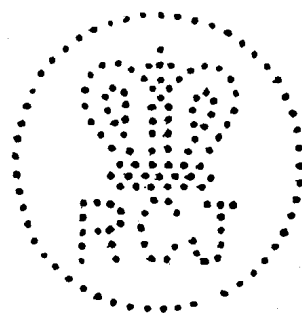
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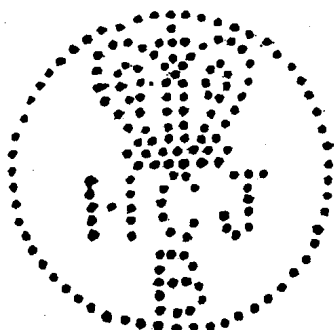
ACCOUNTANT OF COURT



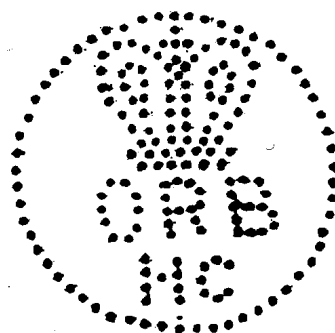
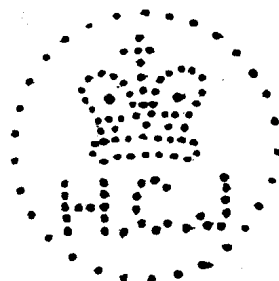
**COMPANIES
WINDING UP**

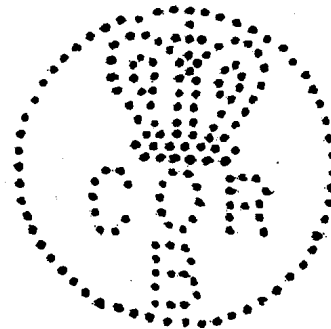
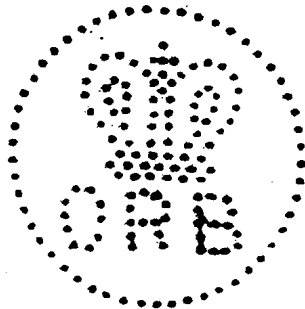
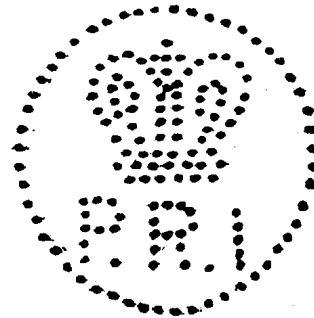
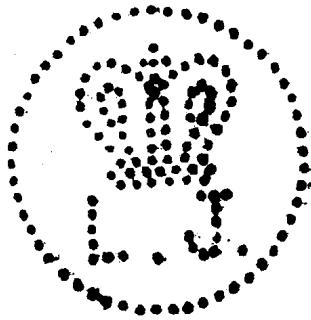


ROYAL COURTS OF JUSTICE

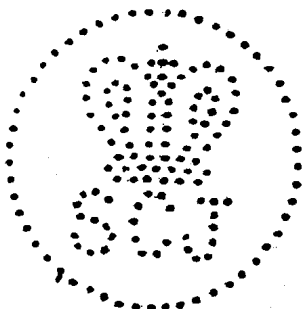


HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

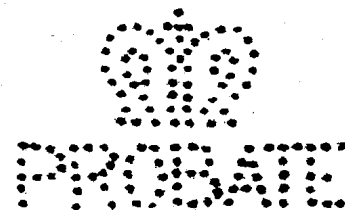




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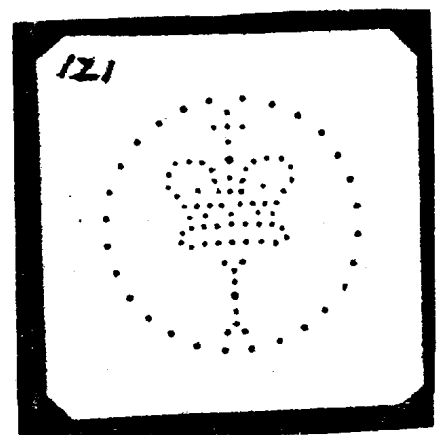
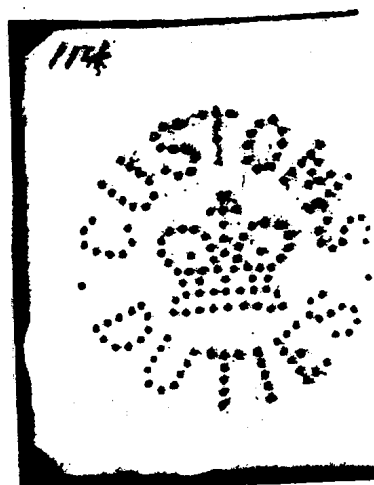
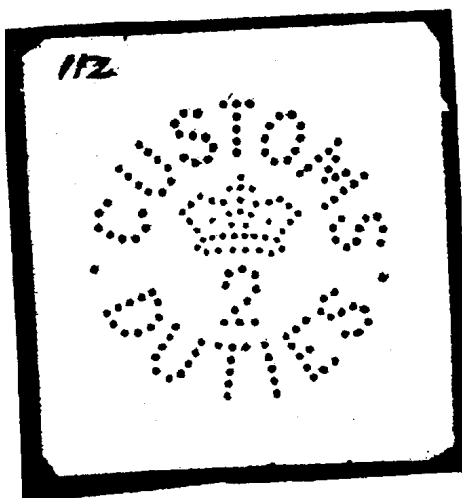
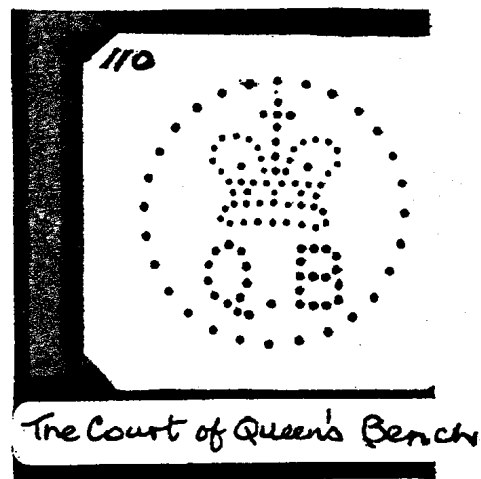
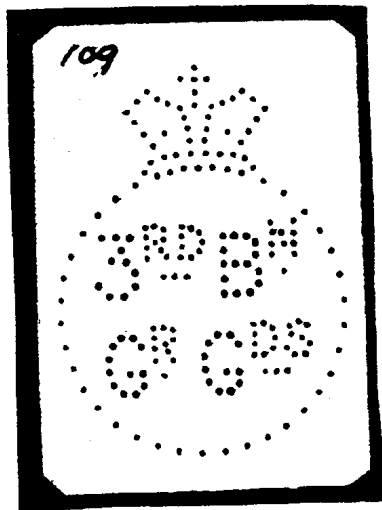
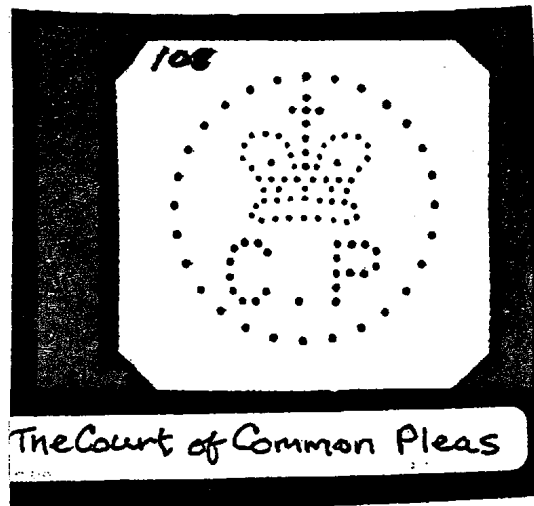


SUPREME COURT OF JUSTICE



COURT OF PROBATE

Some typical Sloper dies from the early Sloper record books



The illustration in the centre at the top of page 64 of *G.B. Official Perfins* [centre bottom of page 19 in Bulletin 295] was from Press No.5020 supplied by Joseph Sloper towards the end of 1875. It was one of several similar perforators acquired from Sloper for use in the different Divisions of the High Court of Justice which were constituted from 1st November 1875. Note the style of the crown. I am grateful to Roy Gault for having checked the early Sloper records where he has found no example of a stamp or cancelling perforator supplied to any customer which incorporates the Board of Trade style crown. This suggests that the (Crown).B.T presses and the other cancelling perforators may not have been made by Joseph Sloper.

Sloper's first patent expired on 31st August 1872 so that from that date any other manufacturer was free to make and sell stamp and other perforating presses and to supply stamps perforated to order. Is it just a coincidence that a line engraved Id red Board of Trade perfin (not Die 1) on piece, in the collection of a member of The Perfin Society, is postmarked LONDON/- FEB 1873? Advocates of the 'forgery theory' will say with some conviction that the stamp was soaked off the piece, perforated with a fake die and stuck back on again, but I have seen no evidence to prove conclusively that this sort of thing ever occurred.

I must express my regret that I have failed in my efforts to locate any Board of Trade archive material relative to their use of perfins. My enquiries of the Department of Trade and Industry were courteously received and researched so far as possible but produced nothing of value. My wife and I spent a considerable time at the Guildhall Library trawling through copies of the Board of Trade Journal for the period in question but to no avail. If any records still exist, having survived the rigorous Civil Service 'weeding' process, I am told that they may be somewhere in the Public Records Office but I have to say that I have never been successful at finding needles in haystacks